

REFLECTIONS

"We do not learn as much from experience as we learn from reflecting on that experience." – Thomas S.C. Farrell, Author, Educator

So much has happened since our last issue of *Reflections*, and we are glad to share it with you now. First, a production note: our editing team has gotten together to identify a better platform for this work, and we are now using a streamlined editing tool, Adobe Acrobat Pro, 2017; this software is state-of-the-art and will enable us to produce our work much more easily and smoothly. Similarly, to maintain a high-quality production value, we are going to plan on bi-monthly releases going forward. Issues will arrive in October, December, February, April, June, and August each year. This will allow our production team truly to be "reflective," as it reviews on work that has happened, as well as "visionary," by looking forward to the next issue. We hope you will continue to enjoy the updates!

One Less Move Referendum Project Nearing Completion

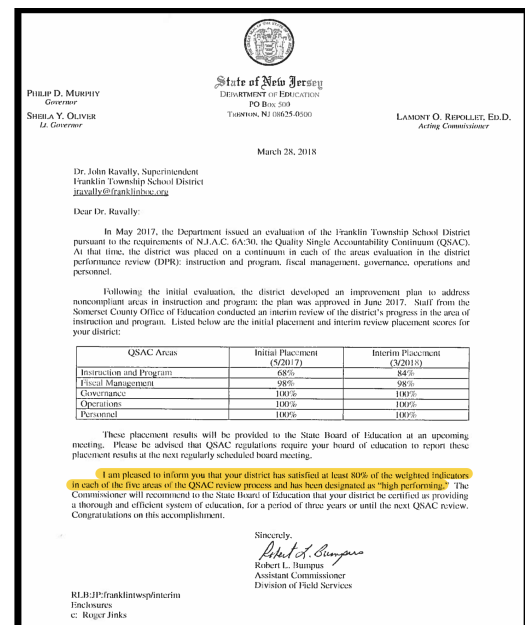
With the recent completion of three town hall meetings to inform our school community stakeholders, the One Less Move referendum project is nearing its final stages. Please **click here** to hear from some of our school leaders on what we hope to see in 2018-2019 and beyond.

FTPS Receives "High Performing" NJQSAC Designation

The district received welcome news last month when the NJDOE declared FTPS a "high performing school district as a consequence of receiving scores of 80 or above on all five of the NJQSAC continuum metrics. To read the official letter from the NJDOE, please **click here**. While the district has historically passed the other four

components of the NJQSAC audit process -- Fiscal Management, Governance, Operations, and Personnel -- this is the first time the district has earned a passing score for Instruction and Program, at 84% (an 80% is needed to pass). In order for a district to earn such a score, it must show that its curricula are aligned

to the New Jersey Learning Standards, and student performance must meet a high enough level of combined proficiency and growth on state assessments. When asked about the NJDOE's recent rating, Dr. Ravally said, "While I am glad for the district, make no mistake: more work still needs to be done, and student growth must continue."



SEL Initiatives Continue to Evolve

As many of our readers know, this year the FTPS has been piloting several social/emotional learning (SEL) initiatives to study how they might best complement our existing program of studies. Based on the NJDOE's recommendations for incorporation of five SEL competencies, **linked here**, our programs have been the focus of our SEL Collaborative Action Team. So far, we have seen success in the following SEL initiatives: Strategies and practices from national guru Dan St. Romain; Sanford Harmony Exploration for K-5; Mindfulness across the K-12 spectrum; and successful incorporation of PBSIS into FHS. Next year, we will add a "Morning Meeting" component to the elementary schedule, which will allow us to incorporate many of these strategies.

Cultural Festival!

Join us at our "One Middle School, Two Campuses, Many Cultures" festival, scheduled for Friday evening, June 8th, at the Franklin Middle School, Hamilton Street Campus, where food and fun will be enjoyed in a celebration of our diversity as well as our new dual-campus middle school! We hope you will join us!

"Student College" Will Offer Unique Experiences for Grades 4 and 5

Beginning in the 2018-2019 School Year, students in Grades 4 and 5 in all elementary schools will have the opportunity to engage in constructive learning opportunities that have not traditionally fit neatly into the typical K-12 learning experience. Based on Renzulli's Gifted and Talented Cluster Grouping Model, Student College will enable our fourth and fifth graders to enroll in an activity of their choice for each of two semesters each year. Equally appealing, teachers will have the opportunity to pursue one of their "passion projects" in offering these learning opportunities to our students. As we speak, teachers are thinking of possible areas of interest they would be willing to share with students, who will be enrolled in this work two times per six-day learning cycle. Student College will offer four areas of exploration for our students: Literacy / Language Arts; STEM; Visual / Performing Arts; and Leadership / Personal Development. Student College is a research-based concept. According to *Edutopia* staff writer Rebecca Alber, noted learning theorists Lev Vygotsky and Paulo Freire proved learning was "a social act, where teachers and students dialogued and...created knowledge together." This kind of constructive learning experience is also the goal for the stakeholders that have created this opportunity for our students. We at *Reflections* plan to keep you posted on our progress!



District leaders are pictured above earlier this spring, listening to Dr. Ravally kick off the first of three town hall presentations for parents and students wanting to learn more about plans for the 2018-2019 elementary school programs.